

Israel kills two women, including pregnant 23-year-old, in West Bank raid

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Smoke billows after an explosion during an Israeli raid in the Nur Shams refugee camp [Zain Jaafar/AFP]

Ramallah, February 10 (RHC)-- The Israeli military has expanded its assaults in the occupied West Bank, killing two women – one of which was eight months pregnant, during a raid in the Palestinian territory's Nur Shams refugee camp.

The troops opened fire on a Palestinian family at the camp, killing Sondos Jamal Muhammad Shalabi and critically injuring her husband, the Palestinian Ministry of Health said in a statement on Sunday.

In a separate statement the ministry said that a 21-year-old woman, Rahaf Fouad Abdullah al-Ashqar, was also killed by Israeli forces in her home.

Palestine's Wafa news agency said the Israeli army raided the camp in occupied West Bank's Tulkarem region early on Sunday and deployed heavy machinery and bulldozers, raiding dozens of homes as reconnaissance planes flew at low altitudes.

Local sources told Al Jazeera Arabic they also heard sounds of heavy gunfire and huge explosions. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Tulkarem Battalion said that it had thwarted an Israeli infiltration into Nur Shams.

Earlier, the Palestine Red Crescent Society also said Israeli soldiers prevented its medical teams from entering the camp, despite reports of casualties.

Israel, which claimed its operation targeted what it called "disruptive activities" in the camp, has imposed a curfew in the area.

The raid on Nur Shams camp came as Israeli forces continue their weeks-long military operation in the north of the occupied West Bank, targeting Jenin, camps in Tulkarem and Far'a in Tubas governorate.

The assaults have displaced more than 26,000 Palestinians from their homes in Jenin and Tulkarem in the past few weeks. Since a ceasefire in Gaza was announced last month, Israel has increased the frequency and intensity of its attacks across the occupied West Bank.

Wafa reported that more Israeli military reinforcements have been deployed towards Far'a camp from the Hamra checkpoint, as Israeli forces continue to destroy infrastructure and private property in the area.

Raids on citizens' homes and field interrogations have also been ongoing, a day after Israeli soldiers forcibly displaced dozens of families, with some of them now sheltering in schools. At least eight Palestinians were arrested in Far'a.

Reporting from Amman, Jordan, Al Jazeera's Nour Odeh said Israel's conduct in Gaza is now being repeated in the occupied West Bank. "The stated aim of this [Israeli] military assault [in the occupied West Bank]... comes under the banner or the pretext of fighting so-called terrorism," she said.

"But the agenda of this [Israeli] coalition government included, long before October 7, 2023, the annexation of the occupied West Bank," Odeh added.

"And so, in order to do that, [Israeli] ministers have openly and repeatedly said they must first shatter the idea that Palestinian freedom is possible, cleanse the area from as many Palestinians as possible and encourage their voluntary migration."

[SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES]

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